

# CHANDAMAMA

JULY 1986

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Turn to Page 11  
for 'STORY OF  
RAMA'







Once there was a little bee.  
A funny smiling bumble bee.



But whenever paper he tried  
to stick, it would fall off with  
a tiny click.



He was sad, and was about  
to howl. When suddenly he  
saw a rabbit and an owl.



Imagine his glee, they were  
bottles of gum. And the  
name on them was Fevigum.



He could see the colour was  
pink. He said 'it will smell  
nice I think.'



He opened it, yelled a  
happy yell. Because it had  
a strawberry smell.



Bee started sticking paper,  
as quickly. And Fevigum  
stuck it all so neatly.



Bee had lots of fun sticking  
too. Use Fevigum and so  
will you!



# Introducing





## The Fun Gum

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gum for schools,  
offices and homes

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Smells of strawberries.  
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and rabbit bottles.  
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"All the while those nasty little tooth demons were just waiting to cause serious trouble to my teeth.

And as my mother explained to me, they were actually 'bacteria' getting together with food particles and 'releasing acids', which would then attack my 'tooth enamel'... bore little holes... and leave behind those painful cavities!

But I knew I was safe! I was armed with



**My  
Superfighter**

**FORHAN'S FLUORIDE.**

It helps me win the war against cavities!



The fluoride in my Superfighter hardens my 'tooth enamel' so that 'bacteria' cannot get through and give me cavities.

Thanks to my mother, I've learnt all about my tasty, foamy Superfighter.

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The Superfighter against cavities.

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FEATURES AND FICTION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



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\* *You cannot eat your cake and have it too!* a dialogue in the series "Towards Better English"

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अप्रियाप्यपि कुर्वाणो यः प्रियः प्रिय एव सः ।

दग्धमन्दिरसारेऽपि कस्य वह्नावनदरः ॥

*Apriyānyapi kuroāṇo yaḥ priyaḥ priya eva saḥ*

*Dagdhamandirasāre'pi kasya vahnāvanādarah*

One who is dear to us remains dear even if he (or she) does something unpleasant. We are not displeased with fire even though it destroyed our wealth.

—The Hitopadeshah

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Controlling Editor.  
NAGI REDDI  
Founder  
CHAKRAPANI

## THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR

The English Chandamama enters the 17th year of publication with this issue. Seventeen may not be a very impressive number, but when you think of the fact that your magazine must have given its readers over three thousand stories, apart from serial novels and serial mythological stories, general knowledge, articles on the use of language, pictorial serials depicting the heritage of India and other kinds of features, we believe, the sixteen years the magazine has left behind assume a new significance.

Let us cooperate with one another in spreading waves of light and delight. Let us pray that goodwill triumphs over hatred.

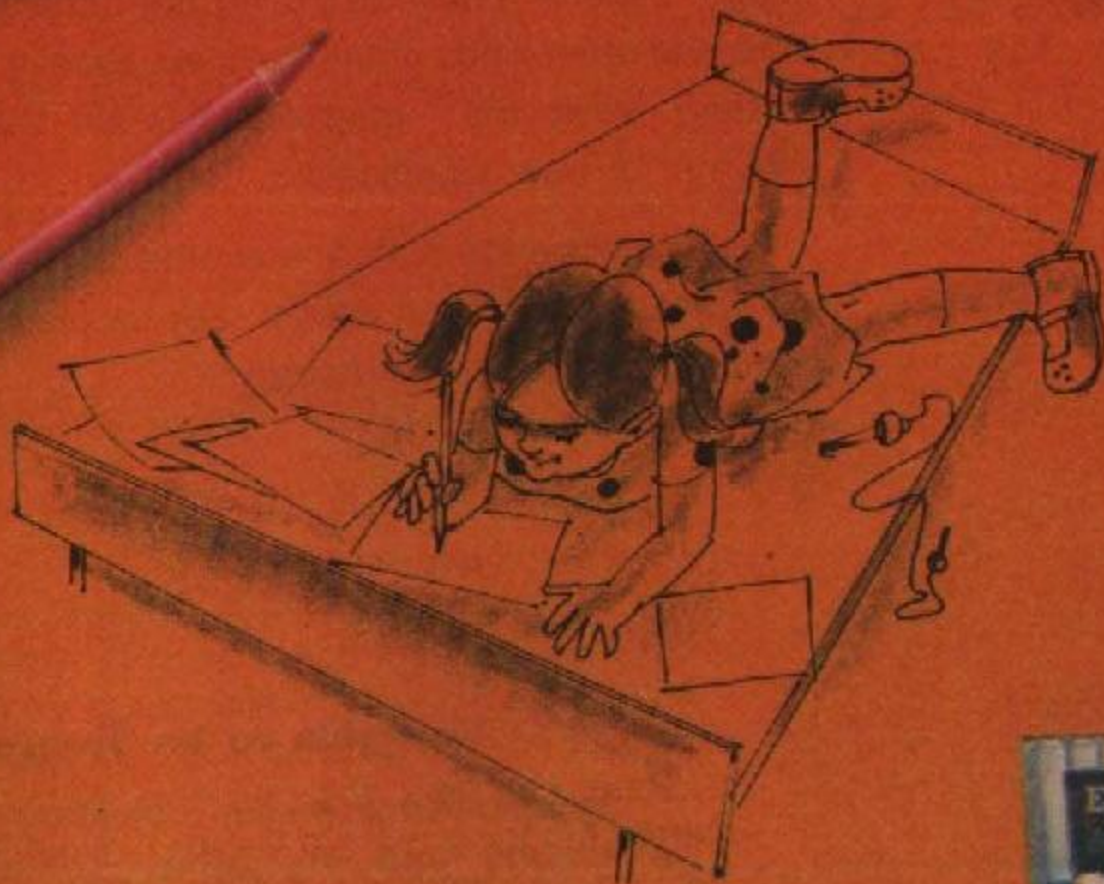
### Thoughts to be Treasured

Independence means voluntary restraints and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law.

—Mahatma Gandhi.



At hide 'n' seek, Renu's friends  
Always make her play the den  
there must be something to be done  
All by myself and yet have fun!  
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## NEWS FLASH



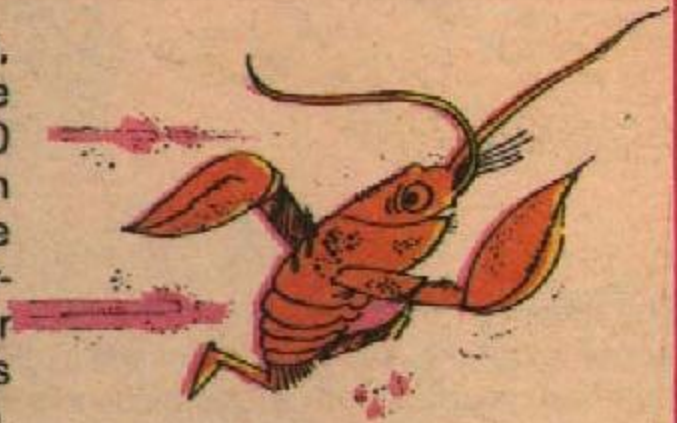
### WAITING FOR OPPORTUNITY

Spectators who had gathered in a Stockholm theatre to see a performance of Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot', a play put up by prisoners in the top security wing of a Swedish prison, had to keep waiting and at last go home disappointed.

Four of the five prisoners-turned actors, taking advantage of the situation, escaped through a window of the city theatre where they had been brought for the show.

### THE GRANDFATHERLY LOBSTER

When a restaurant in Mesquite, Texas, announced on its menu that it would serve a giant 10 kg lobster as a prize dinner, 100 angry people picked up their phones in protest. The callers said that Conan, the colossal lobster had evaded the fishermen's nets for a hundred and fifty four years. It is older than the state of Texas which came into being only 150 years ago. So Conan was set free.



### DEFEAT OF THE JAWS

A 10-year-old boy escaped being eaten by a crocodile thanks to brave friends who fought a virtual tug-of-war with the reptile.

Mgombea Alli was minding cattle by the shores of lake Tanganyika when the reptile grabbed his right leg. As the crocodile started dragging Alli into the lake, five other children who were with the boy came to his help. They managed to pull him free.

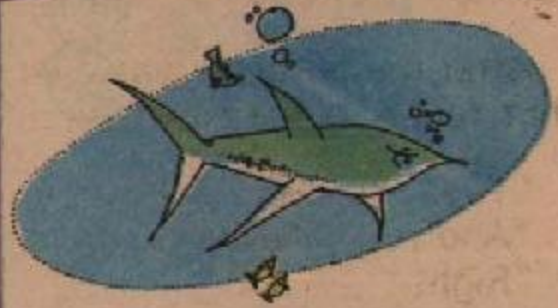


## DID YOU KNOW?



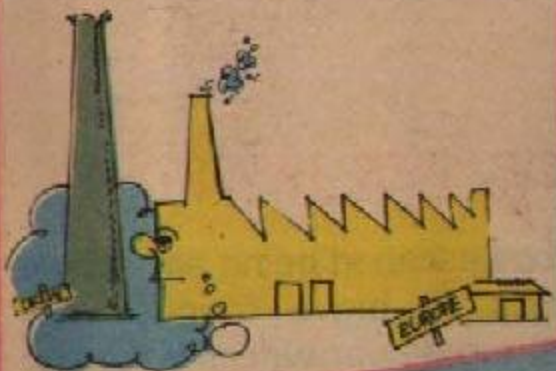
A giant redwood tree that stands in the Humboldt National Forest, California, is believed to be the tallest tree in the world. It is 346 feet high.

There are 30,000 kinds of fish. The largest of them are the whale shark and the basking shark, classified as fish (the blue whale is not), can be as big as sixty feet in length!



Although in India the birds known as 'Swift' are said to be able to fly at a speed of a hundred miles an hour, ornithological studies show that the fastest speed at which birds—in this case homing pigeons—can fly is 94.2 miles per hour.

The Indian astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata wrote about the earth's rotation and circling the sun six hundred years before Copernicus discovered these facts.



The Iron Pillar near Kutab Minar in Delhi which is more than a thousand years old, could not have been forged even in the biggest European workshop till the last century.

The largest number of ancient cities (more than two thousand years old) are to be seen in India.





# RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(Story so far: On the eve of the proposed coronation of Rama, Kaikeyee obliged King Dasaratha to grant her two boons: her son Bharata must be declared the crown prince and Rama must go into exile for fourteen years. Ayodhya is plunged in gloom. Rama leaves for exile. Sita and Lakshmana accompany him.)

## AN EPISODE OF LONG AGO

The broken-hearted king sat weeping in his room. The only person whose presence could give him solace was Queen Kaushalya. But he felt awfully embarrassed to talk to her. Rama and Sita snatched away from her, she was as good as dead.

However, while Kaikeyee

was in her apartment dreaming of her son Bharata's coronation, Kaushalya and Sumitra were near the king, for they knew what a blow the good old king had received at the fag-end of his life.

When the king located them, he said, addressing Kaushalya, "O Queen, I'm suddenly re-







mindful of an episode which I had forgotten. Indeed, I would have been fortunate if I could remain forgetful of it till the end. Alas, that was not to be!"

"What is it, my lord?"

The king then narrated the episode:

That was years ago, when the king was young. He had developed a rare feat. Blindfolded he could strike an animal with his arrow following the sound it made. Princes, members of the nobility and accomplished hunters praised him for his marksmanship and he was immensely pleased.

It was a rainy night. Through

the window of the upper storey of his palace he could see, by the help of lightning, the trees swaying madly. It was as if an invitation to him to adventure!

"The river Sarayu, with her rushing torrents, must be a gorgeous sight now. And what a fun it will be if I can shoot at a boar or a tiger that might be lapping water from the river!" thought the king.

He braved the weather and reached the river-bank. He pricked up his ears and heard a sound which, he was sure, was made by an elephant drinking water. He took aim at the origin of the sound. His arrow shot through the darkness and the bushes and the overhanging leaves like a string of lightning and struck the prey.

A piercing cry shook the atmosphere. It was not the cry of any beast but of a human being.

The king was horrified. What could a man be doing in the river at that unearthly hour? He rushed to the spot. Clouds had parted. In the moonlight he saw a young man who looked like a hermit, lying touching the river. He was filling his pitcher with water. That is the sound that



misled the king.

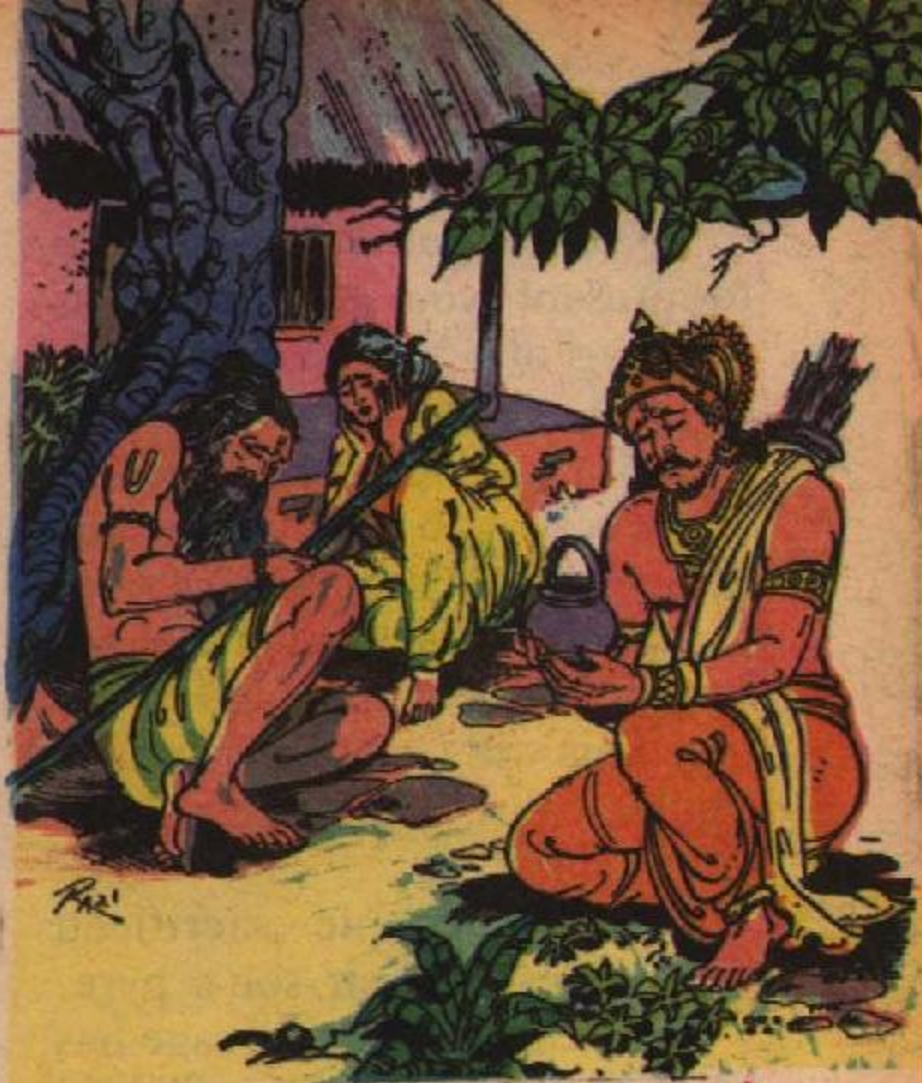
"What harm had I caused to anybody that you decided to kill me?" asked the dying young man whose name was Shravana. "My parents, both of whom are blind, felt thirsty. I came to fetch water. They must be anxiously waiting for my return. Carry this water to them and confess your sin and pray to them to pardon you. Their wrath, expressed as a curse, may otherwise burn you alive."

The young man paused, his face distorted with excruciating pain. "Remove this arrow, will you?" he said.

The king was in a fix. If the arrow is removed, the victim shall instantly die. If it is not removed, he will suffer great pain. The king's uncertainty was over when the young hermit instructed him once again to remove the arrow.

And, as soon as the king had done it, the young man died.

Following the direction the dying Shravana had given, the king advanced and soon reached a hut. "My son, what delayed you? Don't you know that you are our life, our sight, our sole joy?" said the father as soon as he heard the king's footsteps.



First the king gave them water to drink. Then, mustering all his courage, he introduced himself and told them frankly the blunder he had made.

The old man and his wife swooned away. The king nursed them back to their senses. Hardly able to speak, the couple wanted to be led to the riverbank. The king guided them there. The fond parents took their dead son into their embrace and wept bitterly. Then they raised palmfuls of water heavenward and offered their loving wishes to their son—blessed him so that his soul went to the plane meant for



the pious and the noble.

“O King, had you not cared to present yourself before us and beg our pardon, my curse would have caused you a most terrible and graceless death. However, you cannot totally escape the consequence of your Karma. You deprived me of my son at this helpless stage of my life. This will cause us death. A similar cause shall bring about your death!”

The old couple sacrificed themselves in their son's pyre.

“The curse of the old sage has at last struck me down!” said King Dasaratha after narrating the episode, and he lay down.

It was the sixth night after Rama's departure. Except in Kaikeyee's apartment, lights were rarely lighted in the other areas of the palace.

When dawn broke out, musicians, according to their custom, came closer to the king's bedroom and began to play their instruments sweetly. In the surrounding gardens and orchards birds flapped their wings and burst into chirping and whistling. Servants stood ready with fragrant water to pour on the king, for he was in the habit of taking bath early in the morning.

The music played louder. But the king did not wake up. The sun rose, but the king did not rise.

Queens Kaushalya and Sumitra went near his bed and called him and, when he did not respond, shook him. Then they broke into wailing, for the king was dead!

—To continue





## A CONTEST IN LIES

**L**ong long ago there lived a landlord who loved fun. He liked to have a hearty laugh at others' expense.

He once desired to play a joke on the farmers in his village. The only way to lure as many villagers as possible was to announce a reward. He was ready to do so and at the same time was not prepared to spend a pie himself. He made a plan accordingly.

One day the village herald was heard beating his tom-tom and shouting: "Our landlord announces a reward of one thousand and one rupees to the one who can tell a lie. The liar will be rewarded only when the landlord accepts that it is a lie. Any one can participate in the lying competition on the day of the Pongal festival."

Everyone in the village was surprised to hear of a reward







from the arch-miser. Most of them, were sure that the landlord would rather die than part with his money.

But some wanted to try. As the festival was fast approaching, the would-be-participants were shaking their brains over inventing lies that would bag the reward.

The festival came. A crowd collected in front of the landlord's house to enjoy the fun, along with the participants.

The landlord appeared at the entrance of his house. He held in his hand a moneybag which presumably contained the reward. He took his seat on a

platform and motioned to the gathering to sit down.

The contest began.

The first participant stood up, folded his hands against his chest, bowed to the landlord and said, "Sir! Yesterday, at midnight when the sun was twinkling with the stars my sister-in-law gave birth to an elephant.

While he stood still in the same position pressing his fingers against his lips, the audience broke into a guffaw.

The landlord too laughed and said: "Congratulate her on my behalf. Now, the next."

A few among the participants decided to withdraw, for they realised that their lies would be inferior to the one that had already been uttered.

"Who is the next?" cried the landlord.

A few seconds later another farmer who had some confidence left in him stood up. "Sir!" he began, "When my mother was big with me, she went to swim in the sea. As she made a dip, a shark, a hundred times bigger than my mother, tried to gulp her down. But when she screamed for help, I came out of her womb by tear-



ing it open with my sharp teeth. Then, with just a single bite, I was able to tear the shark to shreds. My mother reached the shore safely and I went back into the womb."

The audience clapped their hands in joy. They expected the landlord to reward him. But the landlord only said, "I appreciate your sense of filial gratitude even before you were born. Next, please."

There was a long silence. The landlord was happy over the despair of the two farmers. "Is there any other contestant?" asked he.

One poor farmer stood up. The landlord looked mockingly at him.

"In our previous lives, Sir," began the farmer, "I was the landlord and you were my tenant. And you had taken a

loan of one thousand and one rupees from me, promising to repay it in this life. I have come to receive my money. Will you please settle my account now itself?"

The landlord was about to dismiss his claim as nonsense. But he stopped on second thoughts. Slowly the audience began to laugh. If the landlord called it a lie, he had to give the reward; and if he called it truth, he had to pay an amount equal to that of the reward! In either case he had no other go but to lose.

He admitted that the last participant was the best liar. He gave him the reward.

No one knew for certain how many nights the miser had to spend without sleep, weeping over the loss of his money.

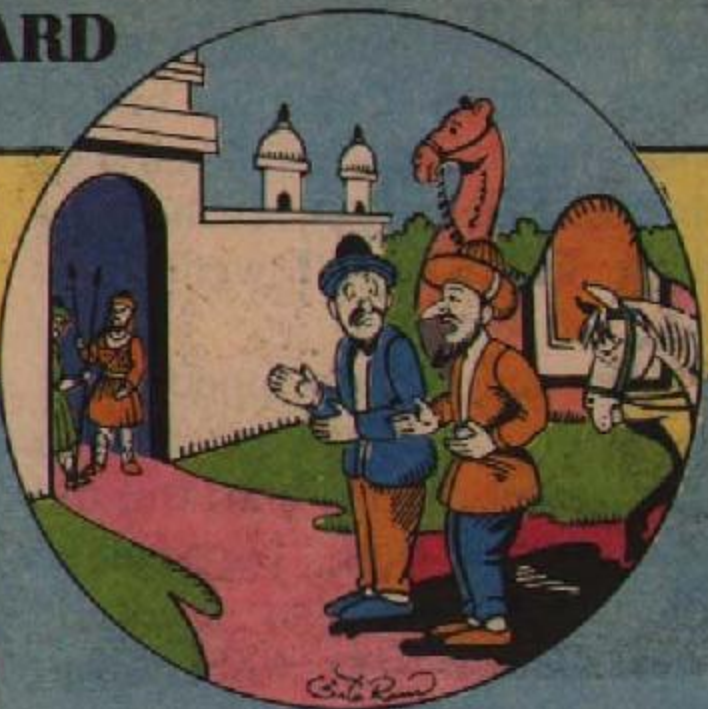
—Retold by P. Raja





# PREPARE FOR THE HARD AND THE HARDER!

A king of old Iran made a rule that anybody passing before his palace must show respect to it. One who did not, shall die, but before death one wish of his will be granted. Of course, one cannot wish for the crown or for his own life.



A traveller who did not bow down was arrested. "What is your wish before death?" the king asked. "To give you three blows, one light, one hard and the third one harder," said the traveller.

The king and the court were stunned. But the king showed his back. The man gave such a blow that the king fell on his face and swooned away. "My lord, now prepare for the hard and the harder blows!" calmly said the man when the king regained consciousness.



Suddenly the king growled, looking at the guards who had captured the man. "You fools and knaves, how did you know that this gentleman had not shown respect to the palace? He might have done so in his mind!" The man was released and the rule cancelled.



## HOW DID THE SNAKE AND THE EAGLE BECOME ENEMIES?

Once upon a time there was a hunter named Punyakoti. He was a great devotee of Vishnu.

One day, as usual, he went out for his hunt. Evening came, but there was no sign of his returning. Everybody thought that he was perhaps killed by some wild animals and gave up hope of seeing him again.

Seizing this opportunity, the king of the Nagas, who lived in the underworld, came to Punyakoti's house and, chang-

ing his wife into a snake, took her away forcibly.

After sometime, the hunter's son returned home and on seeing that his mother was not at home, he became worried. He walked for sometime and reached a huge tree, under which there was an enormous snake-pit. He jumped into the pit.

He reached the city of the Nagas. At first he was very frightened by the swarm of snakes. But as they did not





harm him in any way, he gathered courage and asked them whether they had seen his mother.

The Nagas answered that that morning they had seen their king bringing a woman to the underworld. She had been, of course, changed into a snake and that it would be difficult for him to recognise her amongst the great number of snakes.

The boy said that he would plead with the king to let his mother free. He requested the snakes to take him to their king's palace. So they did.

Seeing her son, the mother,

who was now in the form of a snake, rushed towards him. The king became angry with the son and he changed him too into a snake and kept both the son and the mother imprisoned.

Meanwhile, on the earth, Punyakoti had reached his home, though very late in the night. He was shocked to find both his wife and son missing. He searched for them here and there. Outside the hut, he found tracks of a royal chariot. He followed them and soon reached the tree under which was the snake-pit.

He jumped into the pit and



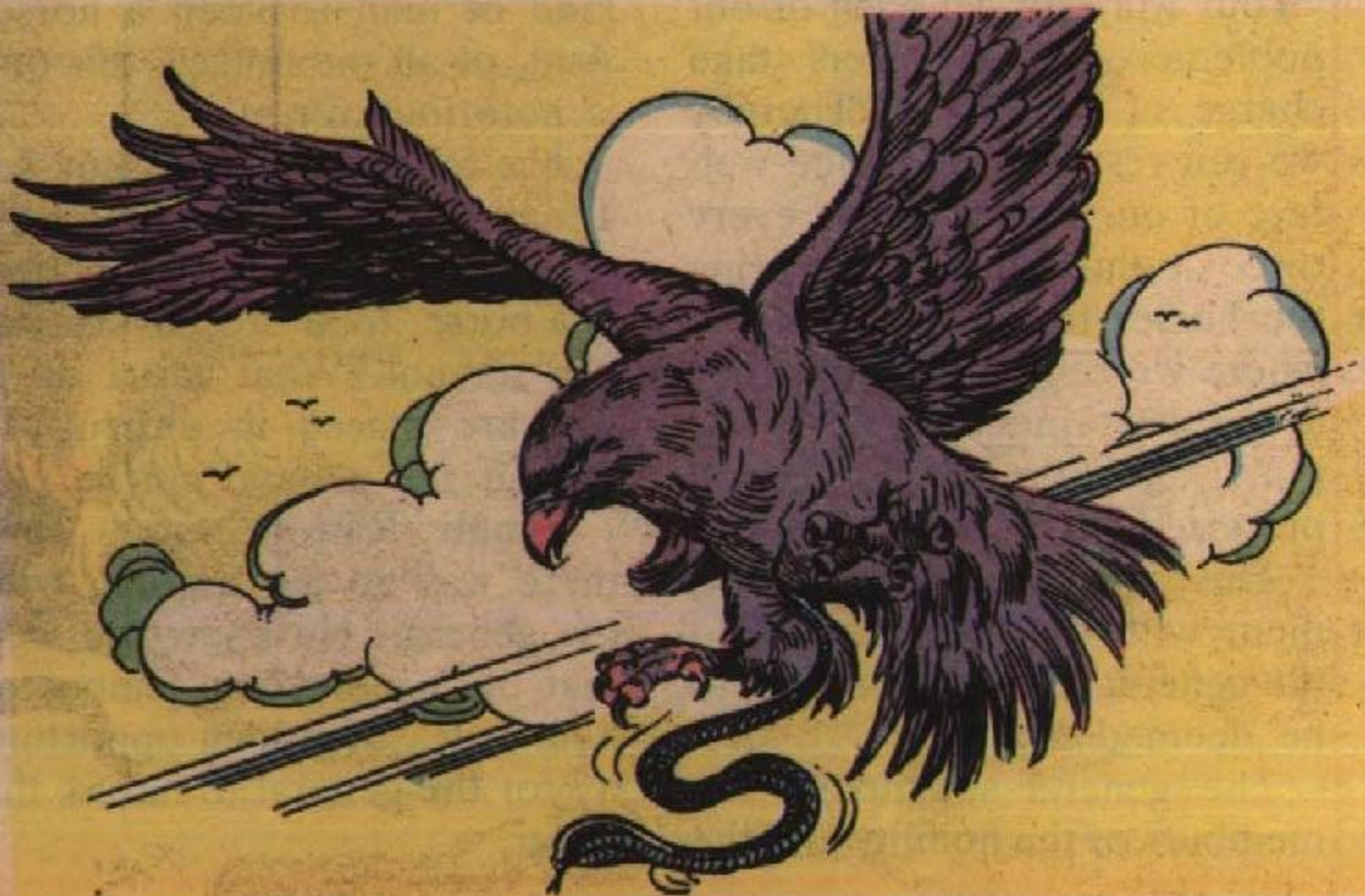


reached the palace of the Naga King. His wife and son were overjoyed to see Punyakoti. But he was unable to recognise them. Out of desperation, he wept and begged the king to release his wife and son from the spell. But the king stood unmoved.

Punyakoti prayed to Vishnu who, pleased with his devotee, answered to his prayers immediately. He changed him, his wife and son into eagles. The hunter instantly caught the king of the Nagas in his claws and flew away. But the king managed to slip through the eagle's claws

and hid himself among the rocks. The eagle waited for the king to come out of his hiding. But, when he found that it was no use waiting, he threatened the king saying that he would wreck vengeance on the entire snake family. Even then the snake-king did not come out of the hole.

Since then, Punyakoti, his wife and son, have been going around killing and eating every snake they can spot amongst the rocks and the bushes. Their vengeance is, as it seems, not yet over.





## HIS MAJESTY'S HORSE



**K**ing Krishnadeva Raya had a number of excellent horses. "Your Majesty, let each of our noblemen and courtiers take charge of one horse. Thereby we can rest assured of the welfare of our horses. Once every three months they must bring the horses to the palace stable where we can see whether they are maintained properly or not," once the king's general proposed.

The king decided to experiment with the idea. He asked the general to allot the horses as he deemed fit.

The general summoned the members of the nobility and the

courtiers and distributed the horses among them. All horses were gone—but one. This one was the most unruly horse, scourge for the king's stable-keepers.

The general called Tenali Raman, the court-jester, and asked him to take charge of the horse.

"General, Sir, I'm not the kind of man to keep a horse. And, of all the horses, this one is notorious for..."

The general would not let Tenali Raman proceed with his objection. "This is His Majesty's horse. You are His Majesty's servant. What can I do if you are placed in difficulty?" replied the general curtly.

Tenali Raman knew that there was no use arguing with the general. He knew too well that the general was jealous of him. It was a golden opportunity for the general to harass the jester.





Tenali Raman managed to lead the horse home. There was a small room outside his house. He confined the horse in the room and locked it. Through a hole in the wall he pushed some fodder every day which the horse greedily snapped up.

A week passed. The general paid a visit to the jester's house and wanted to see the horse. The jester would not tell him where the horse is. The general grew suspicious. If the jester had disposed of the horse, that would amount to treachery with the king. He could be severely punished.

The jester delayed the general till the time for giving fodder to the horse had passed. Then he drew the general's attention to the hole on the wall and asked him to peep through it.

The general thrust his face

through the hole, his large beard extending to the other side. The hungry horse at once clamped its jaws on the beard and would not let it go!

The general cried out in anguish. The horse gave a pull to his beard and he cried even louder.

"This is His Majesty's horse. You are His Majesty's servant. What can I do if you are in difficulty?" said the jester.

The general pleaded with him to save him from the predicament. Tenali Raman brought a pair of scissors and cut the general's beard.

"For heaven's sake, don't tell anybody how I lost my beard," said the general.

"And for heaven's sake, take away the horse," said the jester.

The general readily agreed to it.





## TIPU AND THE GIANT

**T**ipu was a poor tailor. All day he toiled and lived from hand to mouth. One day, Tipu had much hard work to do for it was the wedding of some rich man's son. Up and down and in and out flew his needle and thread. When at last Tipu finished his work, he noticed that a swarm of flies were merrily sipping his tea. With a piece of cloth Tipu gave them one big whack and lo! they all dropped dead. "One, two, three..." Tipu began to count, "nineteen, twenty!"

Tipu had an idea. Quickly he stitched a waist band for himself and on that he embroidered the words, 'Twenty at one stroke!' From that day on Tipu the tailor was never seen without his waist band.

News of his strength spread far and wide. In weddings and market side gatherings, Tipu was the talk of the town. Robbers and bandits no longer harassed the townfolk. For who would dare to lay his hand on the neighbours of a man who



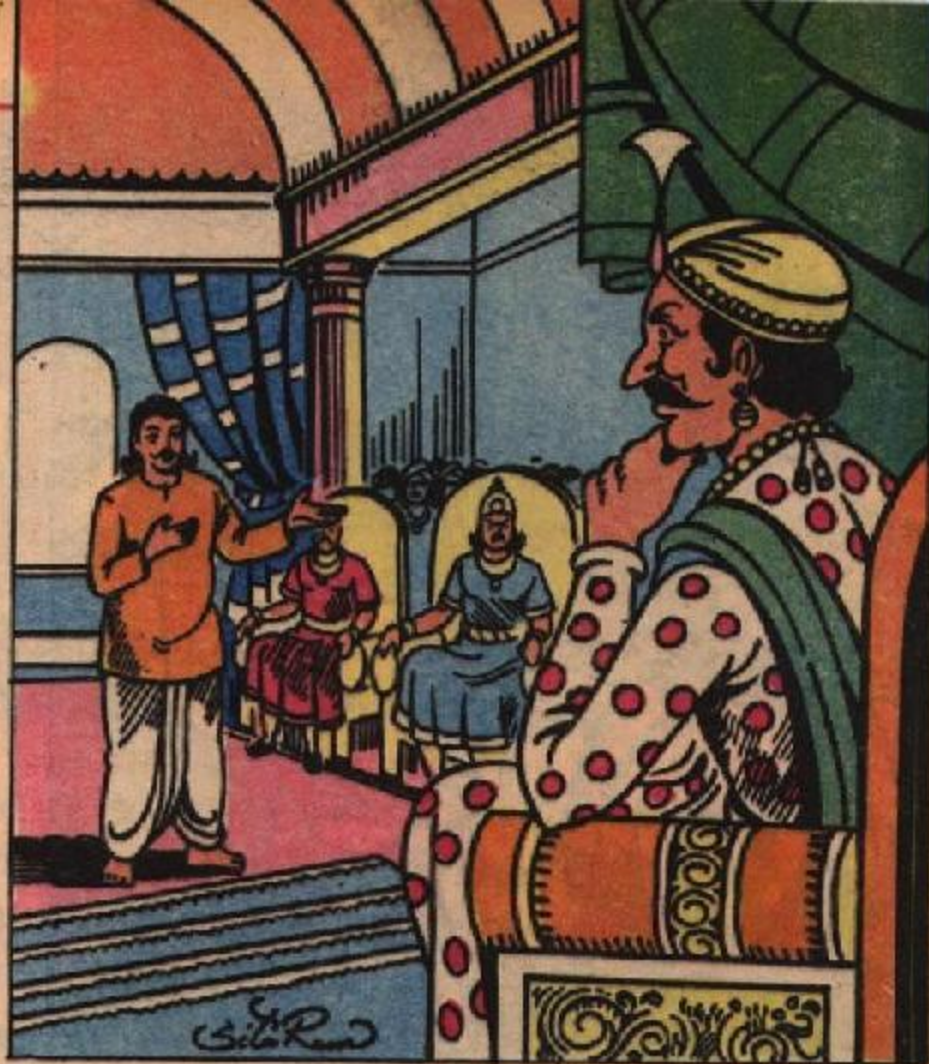


had killed twenty men at one stroke? And that was what everyone believed! That is the meaning they read in Tipu's waist band!

One day, the king called Tipu to his court, "Young man," said the king, "I have heard a lot about your heroic deeds." Tipu bowed at the compliment. "You boast of having killed twenty men at one stroke. Well, I want you to kill just one—the giant who dwells in the forest that surrounds our kingdom. For years he had been a menace. He has bullied our villagers and killed our sheep and cattle in staggering numbers. No one has been able to capture him. If you succeed, my daughter and this beautiful palace is yours, but if you fail..." And the king left the sentence hanging in mid-air.

"My lord, I value my head as much as I value your words. Prepare for the wedding," said Tipu confidently, "I shall be back in two days with the giant's head."

Tipu went into the deep forest. Towards evening when the shadows had lengthened, he came across a mansion with huge iron gates. Tipu picked up



a stone and knocked on the gates. Like cannon shot boomed a voice from inside, "Who's there?"

"Twenty at one stroke!" shouted Tipu.

The iron gates opened with a big clang and there stood a giant fifteen feet tall. Poor Tipu reached only up to the giant's knees.

"What can a midget like you do?" bellowed the giant and he burst his spleen with laughter.

"Give me shelter for tonight and tomorrow I shall prove to you that I am stronger than you."

The giant, more amused than





surprised, admitted Tipu into his palace.

The next day, after breakfast, Tipu and the giant set out to prove their prowess. The giant picked up a stone and said, "Let's see who can throw the highest." And he threw the stone. Up and up and up went the stone and it seemed it would touch the clouds but then it started falling and very soon dropped to the ground.

"Your stone didn't even reach the clouds. Look at mine. It'll go up so high that the sun will gobble it up." So saying Tipu released a tiny bird from his hand which he had hidden all

along in his pocket. Up and up and up went the bird until it disappeared in the clouds.

The giant waited for it to come down but it didn't!

"Well, you win," said the giant in a bad mood. "But that was child's play. Let's see who can uproot more trees."

The giant passed a rope round several tree-trunks and then gave a mighty tug. Crash! Down came the trees.

"Your turn now, midget," said the giant.

Tipu pretended to look at the rope for a moment. "Is this the longest rope you have?" he asked the giant who nodded dumbly. "I want one long enough to go round the whole forest so that I can uproot all the trees together." The giant was startled.

"No, no," he said quickly. "I don't want you to pull down the whole forest. Well, You win. But this time I'll show you!"

Tipu followed the giant atop a hill. "Let's again throw a stone but this time we'll see who throws farthest." The giant threw with all the force at his command. The stone went shooting through the air over the forest and then dropped



with a splash into the sea. Tipu picked up a stone in hand and then started shouting. "You... there... Look... out!"

"Why are you shouting?" asked the giant angrily.

"I'm warning the people across the sea. My stone might hit them on their head," replied Tipu. The giant stamped his foot in rage. "You win again!"

The giant was seething inside. I'll race you down to my mansion. If you lose I'll cook you alive. One, two, three, go!"

Just in time Tipu clutched at the giant's belt. The giant didn't feel a thing for Tipu was light as a feather. He ran like the wind until he reached the mansion. Out jumped Tipu smiling. "This little exercise seems to have tired you!" The giant's brow was dripping with perspiration. He looked at Tipu agape, but did not say a word.

That night Tipu sat down to have dinner with the giant. There was an ugly glint in the giant's eyes. Tipu knew he had to either escape or get rid of the giant or the giant would kill him for he was very very angry.

Dinner over, the two of them filled their goblets with wine. "I bet you can't drink as much



wine as I can," Tipu challenged the giant. The giant gave a contemptuous grunt and started drinking goblet after goblet. He emptied two barrels.

"Enough," cried the giant. "I can't drink a drop more."

"Tired already?" teased Tipu. "Now watch me drink."

Tipu emptied goblet upon goblet. But he wasn't drinking at all. Under his dress was concealed a sheep skin bag and Tipu carefully poured everything into it. The giant was too drunk to notice anything. When Tipu's hidden bag was full he took a knife from the table and said, "Look at me." He plunged





the knife into his stomach. Out poured all the red wine. "See, all my blood is flowing out and yet I haven't lost an ounce of my strength," said Tipu.

"What's so great about that," said the giant. "I can do it too!" He took a knife and plunged it into his stomach. Out poured

red blood onto the floor like a river. The giant instantly fell dead.

Tipu returned to the king the next morning with the giant's head. As promised, the king gave him a palace and his daughter and Tipu lived happily ever after.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS





## CHARACTERS FROM CLASSICS

### URVASI

A great event had taken place in the early phase of creation. That was the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons.

As the churning was in progress, many invaluable things and beings emerged from the ocean. Among them was a nymph of wondrous beauty, Urvasi.

Urvasi lived in the court of Indra, given to dancing and singing. One day a noble king from the earth, Pururavas, visited Indra's court. He saw Urvasi dancing and felt much attracted towards him. Urvasi's feeling towards him was no different. As a result, she made mistakes in her dance recital.

Indra understood the situation. He asked Urvasi to marry the king and live with him on the earth.

For Urvasi it was a curse to be deprived of heaven. But she did not mind it for the king's sake. She brought with her two lovely lambs which she nursed herself.

Four years passed. All in heaven missed her. One stormy night the *gundharvas* stole the lambs from Urvasi's bedroom. She went out into the storm along with the king to look for the lambs. The *gundharvas* led her to heavens.

King Pururavas grew almost mad at his separation from Urvasi. He wandered here and there and at last was united with her in heaven.







A Chinese Folktale

## "THE GUEST"

**A** thousand years ago the capital of a small Chinese kingdom was haunted by a notorious thief. Such was his expertise that far from being caught he had never ever been seen by any one!

The harassed townfolk had complained to the king time and again. The thief had a unique trait. He used to always write behind the 'Guest' on the wall of the house he robbed. Therefore he was known as the 'Guest'.

The king summoned his commander. "Are all our guards and sentinels sleeping? A common thief is on the prowl and none of you can catch him! Shame on you! People are laughing at us. You have to catch him by any means," ordered the king.

The commander called a meeting of the guards and sentinels and conveyed to them the king's urgent message. It was decided that all efforts would be made to catch the thief as soon as possible.

One day the guards caught a young man and brought him to the commander and said, "Sir, this is the thief who signs as the 'Guest'. The officer looked and said, "Sir, I'm an ordinary business man. I come from another kingdom. Because the thief was ordered to be caught and because I'm a stranger to this town, these guards have dragged me here. But I'm innocent!"

The commander asked the chief guard "How do you know that this man is the 'Guest'?"

"Sir, we've kept an eye on him for some time and from his



movements we know that he is the thief," replied the chief guard.

"All right, lock him up for the moment. We'll look into the matter later," said the commander.

The young fellow was thrown into a prison cell. That evening when the prison officer passed by his cell, the young man said, "Good Sir, it is a habit with me to give a gift to a great man the first time I meet him. But alas! it is my misfortune that I am unable to give anything. It isn't that I don't have money, but..."

The officer was a greedy fellow.

"But what?" he immediately asked.

"I'm an ordinary trader. One day I hope to build a house, get married and settle down. That's why, I've hidden some money here and there. But If I tell this to the commander he'll think it is stolen money," said the young man letting out a deep sigh.

"Where have you kept the money?" asked the officer eagerly.

"At the back of the monastery, under a triangular stone. If you don't mind the trouble you can go and get the money

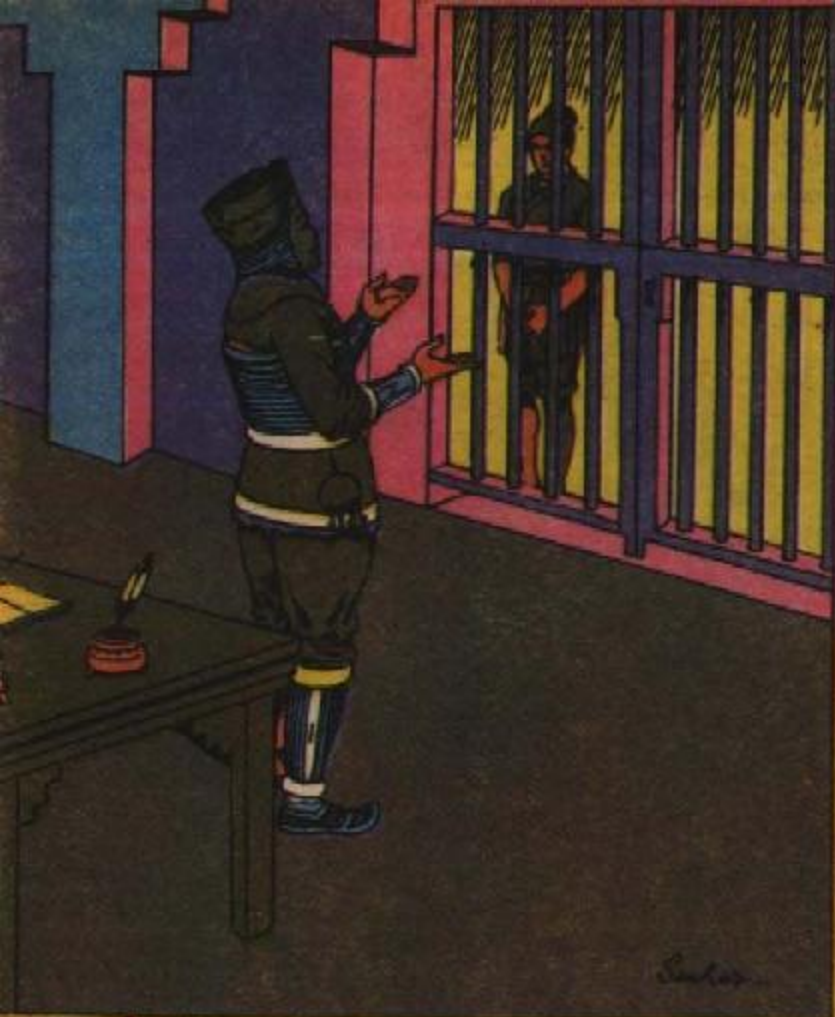


and keep it for yourself. I'll be very happy," said the young man.

At first the officer did not believe the prisoner's story. "But there's no harm in going once just to check, is there?" the officer asked himself. Towards evening the officer went to the back of the monastery, found the triangular stone and when he removed the stone, indeed there lay a pouch! The pouch contained gold coins.

The officer was extremely pleased with the young man. He did everything to make the prisoner as comfortable in his cell as possible.





A big festival was just round the corner. The young man said to the officer, "Sir, if you would fetch two bags hidden under the rocks under the bridge, you could keep one for your family and could kindly send the other one to my aged parents. They don't know about my present condition. If they get the money they'll take it that I'm fine and the money will help them meet the expenses of the festivity."

The officer's greed had increased after his first discovery of the pouchful of money. In the evening he went to the bridge and after looking under the rocks for quite some time found

only one bag. He came back to the young man and said, "I found only one bag. Here it is. Now how do I deliver it to your parents?"

"My good sir, as you have found only one bag keep it for yourself. It is my misfortune that I cannot make my parents happy. But... If you don't mistrust me, then let me out of this cell some time. I won't run away. Why should I? I am going to be proved innocent and I'll get back my freedom with respect. I'll just go and find the other bag and give it to my father and mother. I'll keep back some money from the bag so that we can eat, drink and make merry on the day of the festival."

The officer, greedy at the thought of more money, agreed to let the young man out for sometime. But as soon as the man left the officer was filled with doubt. What if the young man didn't return? He would have to pay the penalty with his own head. Letting a prisoner go off like this was a great offence.

The poor officer could not sleep a wink that night. But the prisoner true to his word, returned to his cell in the middle



of the night. He gave a small pouch full of money to the officer who immediately embraced him with joy and relief.

The next morning the commander came to the prison and in a grave tone told the officer, "the young man who was suspected to be the 'Guest' is not really the thief. Set him free. It hasn't been right on our part to imprison an innocent man."

With great enthusiasm the officer said, "Sir, you are right. This young man is extremely well-mannered and truthful."

"You should have told me this earlier. Last night the 'Guest' struck again and in the same hand-writing wrote behind, 'Guest'. So this young man cannot be the thief," said the commander.

While the officer unlocked

the prisoner's door, the commander said, "My friend, I have a piece of bad news for you. Last night's theft took place at your house. Your wife informed a passing sentinel about it who reported it to me early this morning."

The officer stood speechless with grief. The young man bade farewell to the commander and the officer and went away.

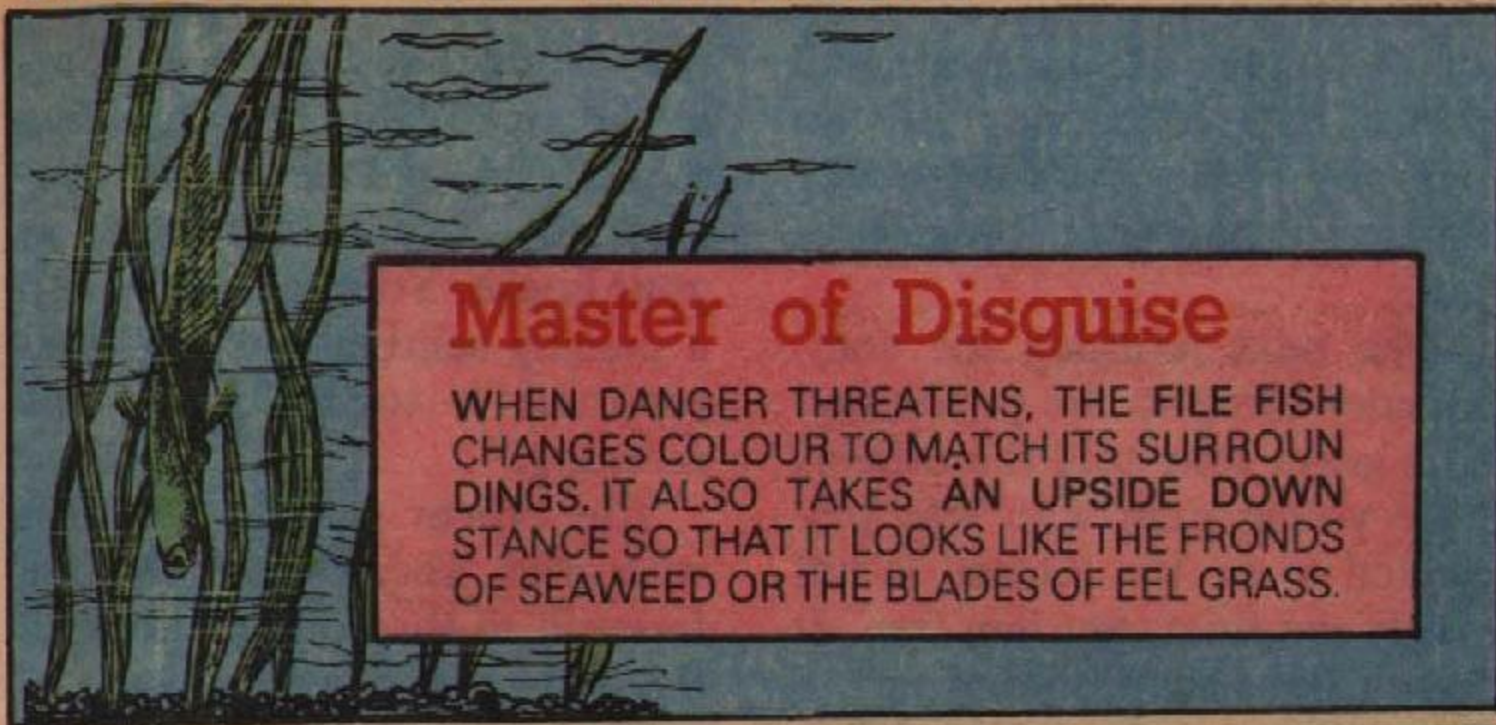
The officer went home to find the hard-earned money that he had saved over the years, all gone. But his wife showed him a bag full of money and in a low voice said, "I found this note in it. It says, 'Thank you for your kind co-operation.' I haven't told any one about it. What does the thief mean? Who co-operated with him?"

The officer stood mute, dumbly staring into space.





# WORLD OF NATURE



## Master of Disguise

WHEN DANGER THREATENS, THE FILE FISH CHANGES COLOUR TO MATCH ITS SURROUNDINGS. IT ALSO TAKES AN UPSIDE DOWN STANCE SO THAT IT LOOKS LIKE THE FRONDS OF SEAWEED OR THE BLADES OF EEL GRASS.



## Oven Bird

THE OVENBIRD OF SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA BUILDS A NEST OF WET CLAY WHICH THEN BAKES HARD IN THE SUN.



THERE ARE ABOUT 500 DIFFERENT TYPES OF TREEFROG DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE WORLD. TINY SUCTION CUPS AT THE ENDS OF FINGERS AND TOES HELP THEM CLING TO BRANCHES AND LEAVES.

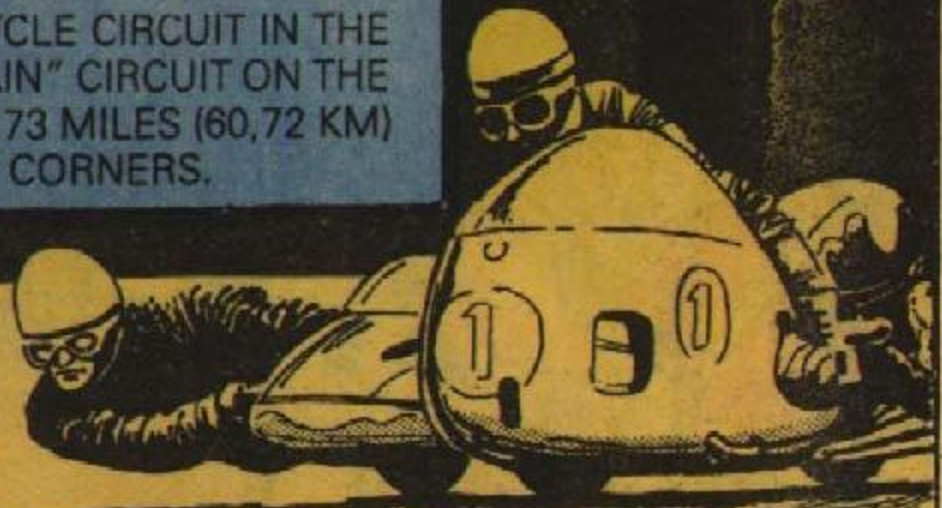
## TREE FROGS



# WORLD OF SPORT

## THE LONGEST CIRCUIT

THE LONGEST MOTORCYCLE CIRCUIT IN THE WORLD IS THE "MOUNTAIN" CIRCUIT ON THE ISLE OF MAN. IT IS OF 37.73 MILES (60,72 KM) WITH 264 CURVES AND CORNERS.



## GRAND SLAM

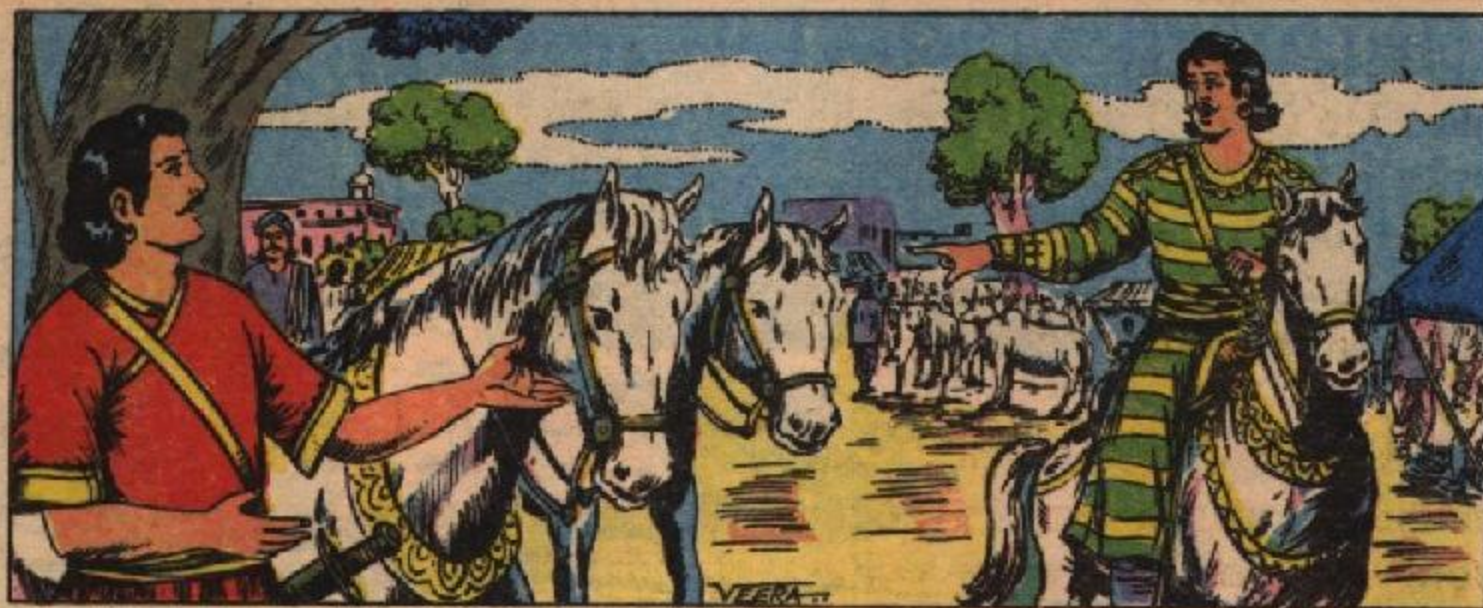
THE FIRST WOMAN TO ACHIEVE THE 'GRAND SLAM'— (ALL FOUR OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIPS— WIMBLEDON, U.S, FRENCH, AND AUSTRALIAN)—WAS THE AMERICAN, MAUREEN 'LITTLE MO' CONNOLLY.



## 'EPSOM'S DERBY'

THE GREATEST HORSE RACE IN THE WORLD WAS CREATED BY THE 12TH EARL OF DERBY IN 1780. IT WAS RUN OVER A MILE AND-A-HALF COURSE ON EPSOM DOWNS, SURREY, AND SOON BECAME KNOWN AS "EPSOM'S DERBY."





## THE HIGHEST COURT

**T**he King of Champak, Vijay Dev, was a good man, but he could not always do things according to his own will. It was because he was too gentle to displease his near and dear ones.

One to exploit this weakness of the King was Sukumar, his brother-in-law. Sukumar was an idler who lived in the palace of King Vijay Dev. The Queen was very fond of her younger brother and the King very was fond of his Queen. The result was, Sukumar went on doing whatever he liked. He had some pals, the good-for-nothing sons of some noblemen. They rode into the bazar when they needed

money for gambling or merry-making. They extorted money from the merchants in the name of new taxes. The merchants thought that Sukumar did so with the King's approval. They did not dare to report anything against him to the King. The Minister tried to caution the King against Sukumar's unruly conduct, but the King turned a deaf ear to his complaints.

One day a village lad named Vikash came to the weekly market to sell two handsome stallions he had nurtured. Sukumar came galloping towards him. "I needed such nice horses. Follow me with them to my stable," he commanded.



Vikash did not know Sukumar. He said, "First pay me the price for them. Then I will lead them to your stable!"

"Price?" shouted Sukumar. "Here it is, take it!" He slapped Vikash.

Vikash was taken aback. But he did not lose nerve. He caught hold of Sukumar by the collar and threw him off his horse and went his way.

Many people saw Sukumar falling, but nobody came to help him stand up. Sukumar shook dust of his body and ran to the palace. The royal couple sat in an inner apartment, discussing things with the Minister.

"A wicked man threw me off my horse!" Sukumar complained, tears drizzling from his eyes.

"What audacity!" Send our guards and capture him!" said the King.

"And put him to death!" said the Queen going over to her brother.

Sukumar went out with the guards and captured Vikash. Vikash explained to the King that he was not to blame. But before the King or the Minister had said anything, the Queen asked the guards to take him away and put him to death.

It was evening. Nobody was





put to death at night. Vikash was detained in jail to be killed in the morning.

But the King was restless. He knew that Vikash was innocent. He called the Minister privately and asked him how to save Vikash without displeasing the Queen.

"My Lord, let Vikash apologise to Sukumar and the Queen. Once the two are appeased, we can set him free," said the Minister.

At mid-night the King and the Minister met Vikash in his cell. The Minister proposed that he should apologise to Sukumar and the Queen for sake of his life.

"Noble Sir, I have already decided to appeal to the highest court. Why should I apologise to anybody for no fault of

mine?" calmly stated Vikash.

The King smiled. "Young man," he said. "You seem to be naive. There is no court higher than the King's!"

"There is, my Lord. The Court of God. In a few hours I will be there. I will tell God that while a King is expected to act on God's behalf, the King of Champak is acting only on his brother-in-law's behalf or the Queen's behalf" said Vikash.

The King stood speechless. Slowly he turned to his Minister and said, "I have been a fool. From now onward I will act only according to truth and justice. I don't care if I am misunderstood by my near ones."

He set Vikash free and gave him compensation for the injustice done to him.







New Tales of King  
Vikram and the Vampire

## THE QUEEN'S CONDUCT

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of thunderclaps could be heard the moaning of jackals and the weird laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, the Vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I do not know whether you've undertaken this perilous task on such a night for yourself or for the sake of a friend. Often while respecting a friend's remarks one changes one's own decision. Let me cite an example. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief."

The Vampire went on: Long





ago the kingdom of Kanchanpur was ruled by King Shashanka. His queen Sunanda was extremely beautiful. The king always fulfilled every wish and desire of hers. The queen was especially fond of clothes and jewellery. So the king had kept a skilled weaver and a skilful goldsmith in his palace. These two artisans were the best not only in Kanchanpur but even in the neighbouring kingdoms none could equal their artistry.

Every year the queen's birthday used to be celebrated with great pomp. Both the artisans used to make the royal gifts for the queen: the weaver an ex-

quisitely embroidered saree and the goldsmith jewellery with the most intricate designs. The queen and everybody else used to praise them a lot and the king used to reward them generously.

Now the king had a childhood friend named Mahendra. Whenever the king had some important work at hand, or whenever a major decision had to be taken, the king always referred them to Mahendra. But what is funny is, Mahendra rarely spoke. He used to listen to whatever the king had to say with calm silence.

One day the minister asked the king, "Your Majesty, there is something that perplexes me. You tell Mahendra about your problems but I've never seen him discuss anything with you or give you advice!

The king replied, "Mahendra is my childhood friend. I understand his feelings by looking at his face. He is a man of few words and doesn't speak unless very much necessary. If he found some fault in what I say, he would surely speak out."

A year rolled by and the queen's birthday approached again. The weaver and the gold-



smith brought their separate gifts. But this time the queen did not like them and she rejected them. The king asked the artisans to make another set of gifts in all haste. But again the queen rejected them. Thrice the craftsmen brought gifts and everytime the queen sent them back dissatisfied.

The minister remarked to the king, "Your Majesty, the craftsmen are no longer young. Their work suffers because of their age".

The king summoned the two artisans and said, "What's the use of my keeping you in the palace? You no longer produce the beautiful things you used to. Your skills seem to have withered away. It can't be helped; it is the fault of your age." So saying the king dismissed the weaver and the goldsmith who had been standing with their heads hung.

Mahendra who was passing by heard the king's words. He approached him and said, "Your Majesty, you are right when you say that age is at fault. The craftsmen are not to be blamed. Their skill had not lessened in any way so it is no use taking them to task. Stay calm



and try to understand the situation."

The king went to the queen's chamber and repeated to her exactly what Mahendra had said. For a long time the queen stood motionless. Tears began to fill up her eyes and she said, "My lord, I have erred in my judgment. Please call back the two craftsmen and ask them to bring along all the gifts that I had earlier rejected. One more thing, I would like them to be greatly honoured."

The king carried out the queen's wishes. The weaver and the goldsmith were greatly honoured in the court on the



queen's birthday.

The Vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, what caused the mysterious change in the queen's attitude? Was it out of respect for the remarks of her husband's friend or is there some deeper reason? And why did the queen shed tears? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!

Forthwith replied King Vikram: "When the minister and the king, both remarked that it was the fault of craftsmen's age, they believed that with the advancement of age one loses one's skill. Mahendra came and said that it was certainly the fault of

age but he also pointed out that the artisans hadn't lost their skill. Only the queen understood the ambiguity of Mahendra's words. She realised that it was her own age that was at fault. Her requirements in clothes and jewellery had changed. What suited her earlier now no longer had the same effect because she was ageing. And it is this realisation, this awareness of the inevitability of growing old, that brought tears to the queen's eyes and she wept for her folly in finding fault with the artisans. Having understood that the fault truly lay with herself, he asked the king to call back the two craftsmen."

No sooner had the king concluded the answer than the Vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.







## The Pilgrim's Progress

**H**ugging the borders of the kingdom of Kaumudi was a vast and peaceful forest. There, in an ashram amidst enormous gnarled trees lived Guru Jeevananda. Jeevananda had a disciple named Prabodh. Prabodh had mastered all the vedas and vedangas. He was a brilliant student.

One day his guru said to him, "My boy, knowledge of the scriptures is good, but it is not enough. You must also develop devotion in your heart. Why don't you go to Kashi and visit the temple of Lord Vishwanath?" Jeevananda gave Prabodh a small bag filled with money. Prabodh took his guru's blessings and the next day left for Kashi.

He walked on and on. One day while walking along the

highway one of his slippers snapped. Luckily for Prabodh, there was a cobbler sitting under a banyan tree. Prabodh went up to him and removed his footwear. The cobbler took it in silence and set to work.

"What's your name?" asked Prabodh.

"Devidas. What's yours?"

"Prabodh."

"Where do you come from? Here, your slipper is ready for use. Where are you going?" asked the cobbler.

Prabodh fished out a silver coin from his bag and gave it to Devidas. "I come from the forest beyond Kaumudi. I'm going to Kashi for Lord Vishwanath's darshan."

The cobbler immediately returned the silver coin Prabodh had so generously given him.





"Sir, will you please offer this coin to Lord Vishwanath? I am a poor man. I don't know if I'll ever be fortunate to visit Lord Vishwanath's temple. Please do me this favour."

Prabodh tied the silver coin in a corner of his upper cloth so as not to mix this special coin with the others and said, "Devidas, I will certainly fulfil your desire." Prabodh journeyed ahead and the kingdom of Kaumudi was left far behind.

After miles of walking Prabodh decided to take a short-cut through a dense forest. He had been walking on fearlessly when suddenly a fierce-looking rider

came and stopped beside him. "Give me all the money you have," the rider demanded.

Prabodh hesitated for a moment than gave away his bag of money. But the rider's eye was as sharp as an eagle's. "What do you hide there in the corner of your upper-cloth? Give it away to me. Don't you know who I am? I am Agnishikh, the bandit-chief. I never spare anyone who disobeys me."

"Have mercy on me, O Chief! This piece of silver coin was entrusted to me by a poor cobbler who asked me to offer it at Lord Vishwanath's feet."

There was an odd flicker in the bandit-chief's eyes. "If a poor cobbler can give, so can I. Here take this bag of money and offer it to Lord Vishwanath," he said in a gruff voice dropping the money bag into Prabodh's hands. And he galloped away as fast as he had come as if this little good deed had made him feel uncomfortable and he was afraid he would change his mind. Prabodh put the money bag safely into his cloth bundle and continued with his journey through the jungle.

The days stretched into weeks. The going was rough but



Prabodh went on undaunted. One day while he was about to pluck a fruit a huge grip tightened around his waist. Prabodh realised with a start that he had been trapped by a demon.

"Hmm..." said the demon, rolling his tongue over his lips, "you smell good. It's been a long time since I've eaten human flesh. You shall appease Rudhiravarna's hunger."

"O demon Rudhiravarna, please spare me this once. I am not afraid of death. But I'm on my way to Lord Vishwanath and the fulfilment of the wayside cobbler's and a bandit-chief's wishes depends upon me. If I do not carry out their wishes which I promised to do, I shall be a sinner. Spare me, O good demon. I promise to come back to you on my return journey."

The demon cocked his ear. Something in Prabodh told him that he was a sincere man. The demon released his grip and walked away into the wilderness.

Eventually, Prabodh reached Kashi. He offered Devidas's silver coin and the bandit-chief's money bag to the Lord and prayed for their welfare. He thanked the Lord's grace for



guiding him safely through the forest.

Prabodh was now penniless but that did not bother him. He stretched his aching legs and settled down on a stone slab. To his surprise he saw Hirachand, a rich merchant from Kaumudi who often visited his guru Jeevananda, coming towards him.

"Aren't you Prabodh, Swami Jeevananda's disciple?" Prabodh nodded. "Let me have the privilege of looking after you while you're at Kashi," said Hirachand. "I've rented an inn. Please be my guest."

Prabodh stayed comfortably



at the inn. One day Hirachand informed Prabodh that he would be returning with some other pilgrims.

"Why don't you come with us?" asked Hirachand.

"Sir, I would like to stay on for another couple of days," replied Prabodh.

"Lord Vishwanath has cast a spell on you," said Hirachand smilingly but another pilgrim said, "You're sure you don't want to come with us? It is not safe to travel such a long distance all alone."

Prabodh smiled. "Don't worry about me. Carry on with your journey," he said.

Hirachand and the pilgrims left. Prabodh stayed on for a day or two and then started towards the forest where the demon would be waiting to eat him up. Prabodh reached the spot where he had met the demon and began calling, "Rudhiravarna, Rudhiravarna!" But there came no thunderous shout of joy. Instead Prabodh found a forest dweller kneeling at his feet.

"I was Rudhiravarna, the demon. I had been cursed by a sage for my cruelty. Because I spared your life I have been delivered of my curse. Your courage and sincerity made me





change my mind."

Prabodh blessed the forest dweller and continued his return journey. One day he heard the beating of drums and as he approached the scene he saw a group of tribals dancing around a throne in which was seated a man. Suddenly the king came towards him and said, "Don't you recognise me? I am Agnishikh, the bandit-chief. The king of the tribals died and as is the custom they set free a dove which came and sat on my shoulders. So I'm being coronated their king. I spared you and gave you a money bag to offer to Lord Vishwanath and in re-

turn my destiny has been changed. I owe much to you." The newly coronated king knelt down. Prabodh blessed him and went ahead.

After many weeks of solitary travelling through the forest, Prabodh reached the highway where he had met the cobbler. But under the banyan tree there was no sign of either Devidas or his tools. As Prabodh entered the town he saw a newly opened shoe-shop. The owner, at the sight of Prabodh, came hastily down the steps with folded hands.

"Sir, it is I, Devidas, the cobbler. A month after you left







my business began to flourish suddenly. People came in large numbers to me. I had to hire more hands to meet the orders. A few weeks back I inaugurated this shop. The Lord Vishwanath has answered my prayers. I shall remain eternally grateful to you."

Prabodh blessed him and headed for his ashram. He went straight to his guru and touched his feet. Prabodh told Jeevananda all about his journey and back, about the people he met and the extraordinary happenings. "But, Guruji," said Prabodh "It was I who journeyed to Kashi to have the darshan of

Lord Vishwanath, but while the cobbler, the bandit-chief and the demon seem to have gained from it what about me? I don't seem to have gained anything. What was the use of my journey?"

The guru remained silent for a while then answered, "The demon was fortunate in meeting a sincere and fearless man like you. He was delivered of his curse because he spared your life. Mankind has to evolve, it must progress. If the demon had continued to be a demon, God knows how many men would have had to end up as his dinner. It was a necessity that he should change and that little gesture of kindness on his part was enough to bring the change. The same with the bandit-chief. His life had been a set pattern of loot, kill and enjoy until he met you and on his own gave you money for the first time to offer at Lord Vishwanath's feet. Like the demon, his fate had to be changed too. Now that he is a king, he has to take the responsibility of the welfare of his people. He can no longer afford to loot and kill and bring misery to others. Lastly, the cobbler. He of course deserved a better





life. Devidas could hardly make both ends meet and yet he gave away a silver coin and so God blessed him with prosperity." The guru paused. "Now, tell me, what did you ask of Lord Vishwanath?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied Prabodh simply.

"And yet you too have gained something, although the change is not as apparent as in the case of the other three. When you set off from here your understanding of God was a knowledge acquired from the scriptures. But as you progressed on your

journey to Kashi, God became a living Grace, a presence that guided you and changed everyone who came in contact with you. Tell me, did you not feel that presence?" asked Jeevananda.

Prabodh nodded.

"And lastly you've gained something that a thousand books cannot teach. Surrender. You surrendered yourself completely to God. That is why you weren't afraid of going back to the demon. God looks after those who repose their trust in Him."

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## THE PROOF

King Amarsing was surrounded by powerful neighbours. He was therefore obliged to keep his army constantly in full gear. Blacksmiths in his kingdom worked round the clock to make swords and daggers. The king used to have these arms tested by a minister who claimed that he could know the sharpness of a weapon by smelling it. Somehow the king had come to believe him. But the minister was a dishonest fellow. He never passed a weapon as being satisfactory unless the blacksmith had first given him money. So, many imperfectly made swords passed as good ones while some really good swords were rejected.

Now, there lived a poor blacksmith who made up his mind to have his dagger passed without a bribe to the minister. He put some fine pepper in the scabbard of the dagger and carried it to the palace.

The minister raised his eye-brows at the blacksmith's audacity in showing his ware directly to the king, without first appeasing him.

As always, the minister unsheathed the dagger in the presence of the king. "I don't think it has sharpness enough to scratch even a butterfly," he observed as he put it under his nostrils. Tchoum! The pepper caused the minister to sneeze and he cut a bit of his nose on the dagger's edge.

"It is sharp enough, I see!" exclaimed the king. The minister was in no mood to talk. He was led to the physician.

Thus did the blacksmith prove the sharpness of his dagger without bribing the minister.





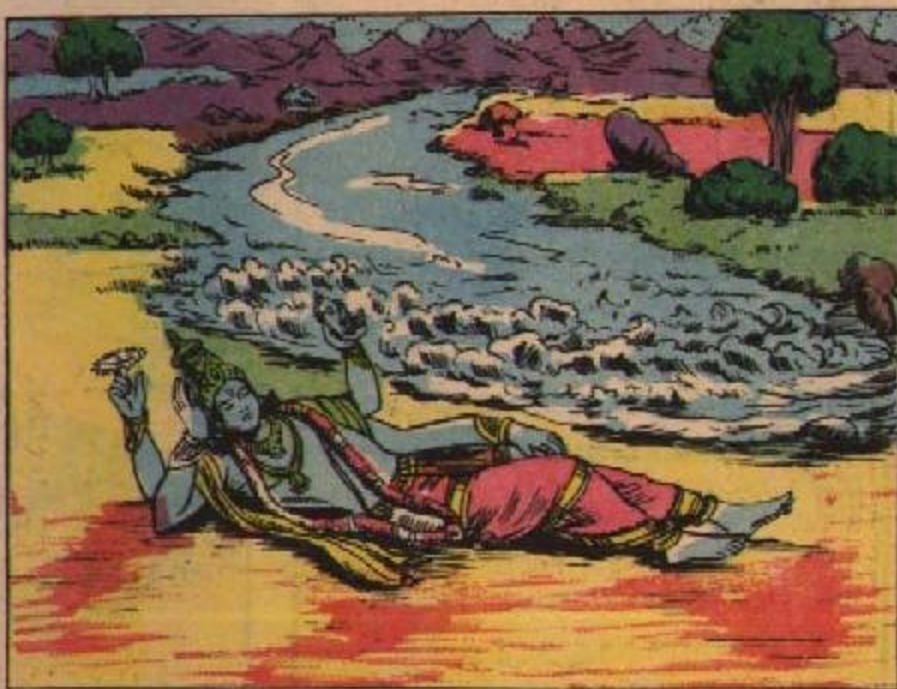
## TEMPLES OF INDIA

### SHRINES OF KANCHIPURAM

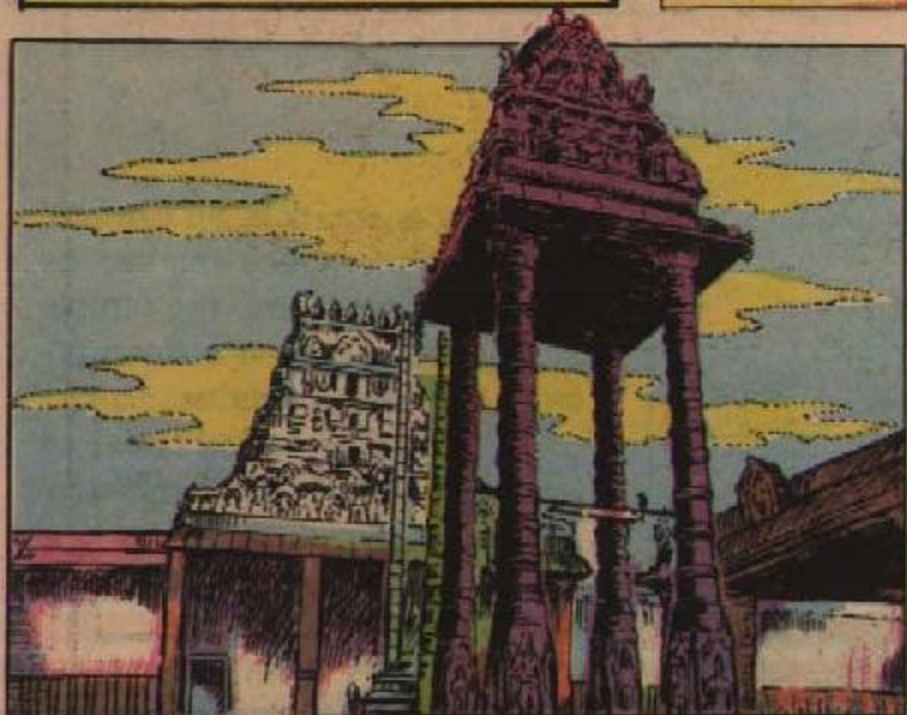
According to a legend once Lord Brahma was required to perform a Yajna. He chose Kanchipuram, then known as Satyavrata Kshetram or the place steeped in Truth. He began the Yajna.



Goddess Saraswati, however, did not like this. She took the form of the river Vegavati and tried to flood the seat of the holy rite. In time Lord Vishnu lay down and stopped the water from submerging the site.



At Brahma's request thereafter, Lord Vishnu stayed on at the place. He is known as Sri Varadaraja Swamy—the Deity who grants boons with compassion. The present structure of the temple is built on several old structures.

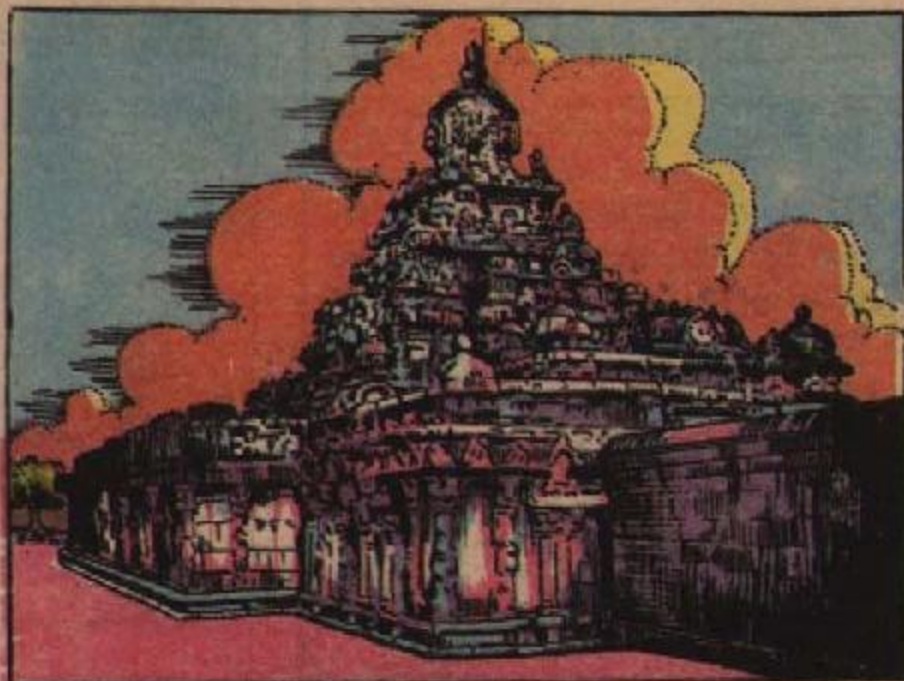






Built by King Raja Simha of the Pallava dynasty is Sri Kailasa-natha temple, remarkable for its architectural charm. In the sanctum is the Linga sculptured from 16 slabs. Its compound wall contains 58 small shrines.

Yet another splendid temple, is Sri Vaikuntha Perumal temple built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla also a Pallava king. Its three-storeyed Vimana enshrines Vishnu in standing, seated and reclining positions.



Of hoary antiquity is Sri Ekamra-natha temple. Once marked by one thousand pillars, the temple still has six hundred sixteen pillars. Numerous shrines, mandapams, gopurams and tanks are encompassed by the large temple complex.



Long ago when all the gods and great seers gathered at Mount Kailash to witness the marriage of Siva and Parvati, Siva asked Sage Agastya to proceed to the South so that the spiritual balance of the sacred land was not disturbed.

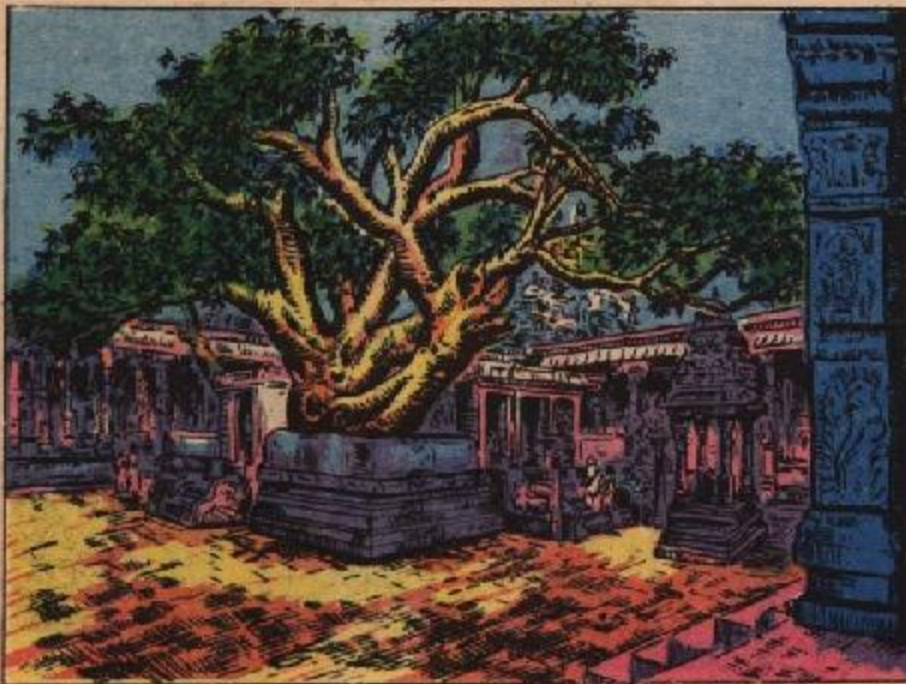


Agastya reluctantly obeyed Lord Siva, but on condition that the Lord's marriage will be performed once again, exclusively for his delight. Accordingly Parvati, as a maiden, once worshipped Siva's symbol, the Lingam, on the bed of a stream called Campa.

To scare away Parvati, Siva suddenly sent a mighty current over the stream which threatened to wash away the Lingam. Parvati held it to her bosom, ready to be swept away along with it. Then Siva appeared and married her—witnessed by the Sage Agastya.

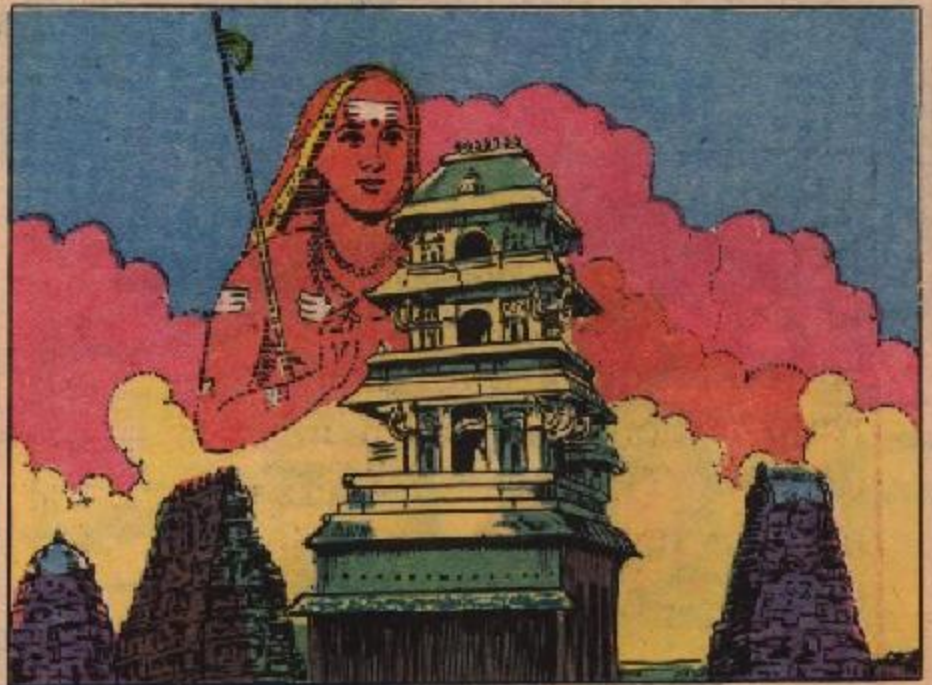






The name Ekamra is believed to have come from an ancient mango tree near the temple. The tree is said to be thousands of years old. Its four branches, representing four Vedas, give mangoes different in taste.

Kanchipuram is one of the seven most sacred cities of India. Shankaracharya, established here one of his muths, the Kamakoti Peetham. A celebrated Muslim mystic, Hazarat Hamid Avaiya, chose Kanchi for his seat.



This ancient city of temples had once become famous for Buddhist studies too. In the 7th century Hiuen Tsang visited it. He saw here Buddhist monuments. They have disappeared in course of time.





## A BET

**S**eth Veerdas of Devpur village was a thriving money-lender. Most people who borrowed money from him used to return their dues with interest on time. There were others who used to pay him back in instalments.

In the neighbouring village of Dharmapur lived a rich man named Yashpal. His father and grandfather had left behind much wealth and property for him but Yashpal choose to be a money-lender in order to amass more wealth. He used to charge such heavy interest on the loans that the borrowers took a long time in repaying him. Yashpal would then send his bodyguards who would by brute force ex-

tract the dues from them. Eventually Yashpal came to be known as a cruel man. His rough ways of recovering his money from the borrowers and the curses the latter heaped on him soon took their toll of him and he lost his peace of mind.

Yashpal had heard about Veerdas. One day he went to Devpur to meet him. After some small talk Yashpal asked, "Brother, how do you manage to recover your money along with the interest so smoothly?"

Veerdas said, "I don't do a thing. The people themselves come and repay me."

"But what do you do in the case of dishonest men or mischiefmakers?"





“Whatever the case might be,” said Veerdas, “I manage to get back my money with tact.”

Yashpal was silent for some time. Then he said, “Listen, I’ll borrow two hundred rupees from you. Within six months you should extract the money along with the interest from me. I throw a bet of one thousand rupees!”

Veerdas nodded in agreement. “I have a rule and I do not wish to make an exception to the rule. If the borrower is not of my village I take some security against the money I lend.”

“No problem,” said Yashpal.

“Here, take this bracelet of gold. But you have to return it to me after getting your money back. You can’t sell the bracelet in order to recover your money, mind you.”

Yashpal went back to his village and for the next six months was always on the alert. In the six months that had passed, Veerdas had never once asked him to repay the loan. Yashpal in all confidence went to Veerdas. On seeing Yashpal Veerdas enthusiastically burst out, “I hope you’ve brought a thousand rupees with you!”

Yashpal was taken aback. “Money? why should I bring the money? You’ve lost the bet. You haven’t been able to get back the loan you gave me. You should give me a thousand rupees!”

Veerdas laughed and said, “I recovered my money long back.”

“Lies!” shouted Yashpal. “When and how did you do it? Don’t think that I’ll be fooled so easily by your empty words. Show me the proof that you’ve got your money back. You’re lying because you’ve lost the bet!”



"I don't need to hide behind a facade of lies," said Veerdas unperturbed and called for his servant Govind. "Do you recognise this man?" he asked Yashpal.

Yashpal looked at Govind and slowly he began to perceive a few things. One rainy night, this man had come begging to his house for two hundred rupees because his wife was seriously ill. Yashpal, being cautious as money-lenders usually are, demanded some security because he had never seen the man before. Govind had come prepared to meet the demand. He put forth a few gold bangles. On seeing them, Yashpal had immediately given Govind the sum of two hundred rupees. In this way, Veerdas had already recovered the money he had lent to Yashpal.

Yashpal said in an agitated voice. "This is cheating. It was decided that you would return my bracelet which you have kept as security while receiving your dues. You haven't kept your word!"

"Calm down, brother. The gold bangles that Govind gave you on that night are yours. The



only difference is that I've had your bracelet changed into bangles by a goldsmith. You can weigh the weight if you wish, it's the same."

Yashpal realised that he had been beaten. But he didn't want to give up so easily. After some thought he said, "I won't give you a thousand rupees. Let's see how you extract this amount from me," he said.

Veerdas smiled and said, "Right from the beginning I had a feeling that you'd cheat me. Your bracelet worth two thousand rupees is still with me. The bangles that Govind gave you are not of pure gold but





copper with gold plating. You can give one thousand rupees plus the bangles and take back your gold bracelet." Veerdas asked Govind to fetch the bracelet.

In the meantime Yashpal went back to his village and returned to Veerdas with one thousand rupees and the bangles and in exchange took back his gold bracelet.

"You were supposed to return my bracelet while recovering the loan. You've tried all possible tricks to outwit me," said Yashpal.

Veerdas laughed a little and said, "That is what, I did! I knew you would be extremely cautious in this affair. So I had to do all this drama."

Yashpal got up to go. "In this money-lending business, I'm

but a small child compared to you. I have a lot to learn from you."

Veerdas approached Yashpal and in a brotherly manner said, "there is nothing wrong in claiming the money we lend as a loan. The problem arises when we are greedy and charge the poor people a high interest. But if we charge a reasonable percentage the poor are in fact grateful and they do their best to repay the loan as fast as possible."

Yashpal turned to Veerdas and said, "Brother, I tried to harass you without success. Your wisdom comes from your personal experience. I too wish to profit by your experience and henceforth I shall follow your way of dealing with people."





## A SPEAKER'S WISH

Somyananda was the speaker at a study circle meeting. After his address one of the listeners asked him foolish and snobbish questions which annoyed the scholar's friends. Somyananda, however, tried to satisfy the listener with patiently given answers.

After the meeting was over one of his friends asked him, "Somyananda, that fellow's questions were just foolish; am I right?"

"Yes," said the scholar.

"And you believe in speaking truth and nothing but the truth; am I right?"

"Right."

"Then how did you tell that fellow that you wished you met dozen listeners like him every year? Was it not a lie? How can you wish to meet more of such vain fellows who just wanted to show off?"

"What you must understand is, I meet no less than a hundred such irritating fellows every year. I wished that I met a dozen and no more!" explained the speaker.





## THE SUPERIORITY FEE

The ancient temple dedicated to Lord Rama was crumbling. The villagers generously contributed to the fund meant to be used in raising a new temple. Even then more money was needed.

In their village they had two gifted singers—Sudhakar and Kinkar. The village president thought that it will be a good idea to make them sing before a gathering of invitees from the other villages. The invitees will be required to pay. The money thus collected will go to the temple fund.

"How much will you take if you are requested to sing for a good cause?" the village president asked Sudhakar.

"A hundred rupees will do, if it is a good cause," replied Sudhakar.

The president then told Kinkar that Sudhakar had agreed to sing for a hundred rupees. He expected Kinkar to do the same.

"What!" exclaimed Kinkar. "Do you take me to be a singer of Sudhakar's level? I am far superior to him. You must pay at least one rupee more to me."

The president agreed.

At the end of the performance, the president announced, "Kinkar had demanded a rupee more than Sudhakar. When Sudhakar knew the purpose of the function, he refused to take anything. In other words, we have to pay Kinkar Zero plus one rupee."

He handed over a one rupee coin to Kinkar.





## OF COMMONSENSE AND COMMON SENSE

"Grandpa, our new English teacher is a strange man. He has underlined a phrase used by me in a way as if I had written it wrong. But, what is funny, he has written what is supposed to be correct in the margin—and he has written the same phrase, letter by letter."

Grandpa Chowdhury took the notebook from the amused Rajesh and observed the correction. He smiled. "No, Rajesh, there is nothing strange with your teacher. What is strange is your failure to understand what he has tried to show. You have used the phrase *common sense* as an adjective, saying, 'A common sense approach to the problem is lacking.' The phrase *Common sense*, consists of two words and it means practical average capacity. But when used as adjective, the two words come together and make one word. Don't you see how the teacher has written the phrase without leaving any space between the two words?"

"Grandpa, is *sometime* to be written as one word?" asked Reena.

"Yes, child, *sometime* or *sometimes* is one word."

"Is it all right or alright?" asked Rajesh.

"All right is correct," said Grandpa in the process of bringing out two dictionaries from the shelf. "Look here. It is interesting. The 1972 edition of Chambers writes about *alright*: an unaccepted spelling of *all right*. Now, look at the 1984 edition of the same dictionary. It says about *alright*: an alternative, less acceptable spelling of *all right*. In other words, *alright* is slowly gaining ground. But it should be all right if you stick to *all right*."







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## LET US KNOW

**What is Greek tragedy?**

—P. K. Sankaran, Bombay.

Greek tragedy grew out of religious ceremonies. At ancient festivals, a chorus of men dressed up like goats would sing and dance to honour Dionysus. The word *tragedy* was formed with Greek *tragos* meaning he-goat and *goide*, meaning song.

In the 6th century B.C., Thespis of Athens, the 'father of drama', introduced an 'answerer' or actor who addressed spoken bits to the chorus. These bits and the number of actors increased with the passage of time and thus drama was born. Later drama became a full-fledged item and was regularly performed in celebrations.

Greek tragedy is made up of several parts: (i) a prologue, an introduction and exposition spoken by one person; (ii) the entrance song of the chorus; (iii) *episodes*, sections in which the main characters enact parts of the plot; (iv) choral songs following each episode; (v) the *exodus*, action taking place after the last choral song.

Greek tragedy is either mythological or heroic or both in substance. Fate plays a great role in it.

**Is News a singular expression?**

—Susheela Verma, Patna

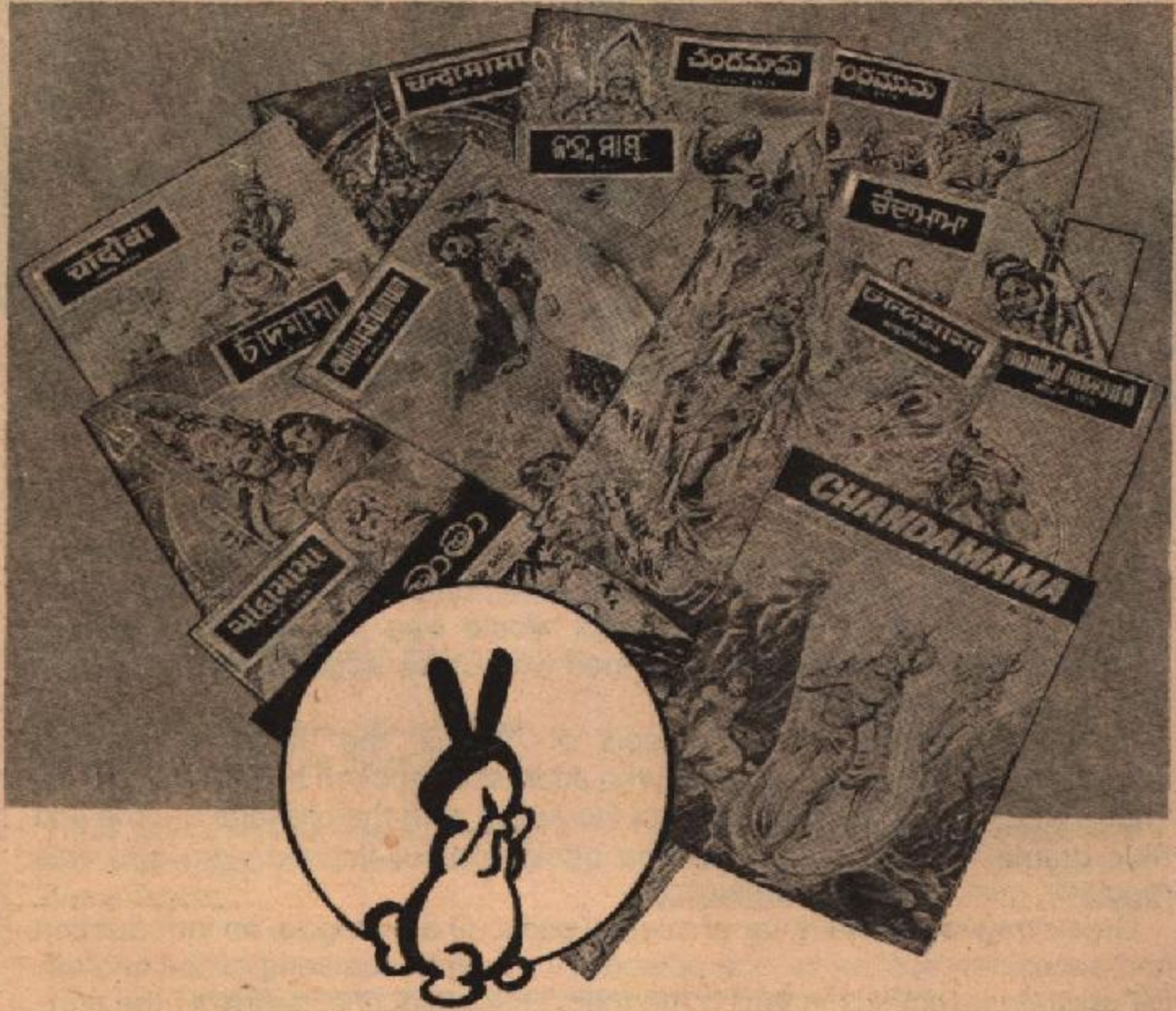
Yes. The word formed with the initials of North, East, West and South, had been used as plural at the beginning by some.

**When did Aryabhatta live?**

—Vinay Kumar, Rourkela

This great astronomer and mathematician was born in A.D. 476. About a thousand years before Copernicus he found out that the earth revolved round the sun.





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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

A man who knows he is a fool is not a great fool.

—*Chaung-Tse*

Friendship is like money, easier made than kept.

—*Samuel Butler*

A great man is he who has not lost the heart of a child.

—*Mencius*



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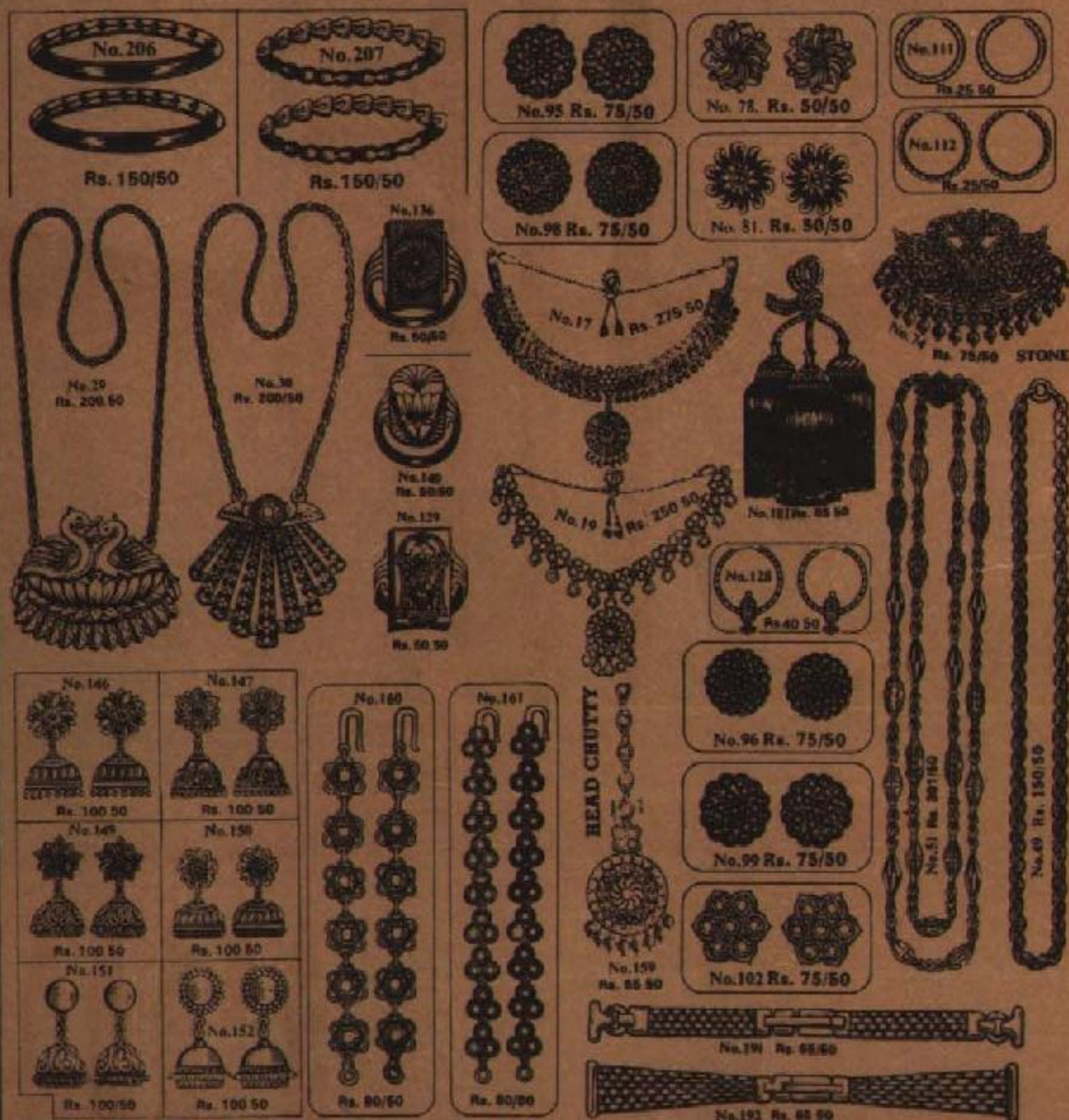
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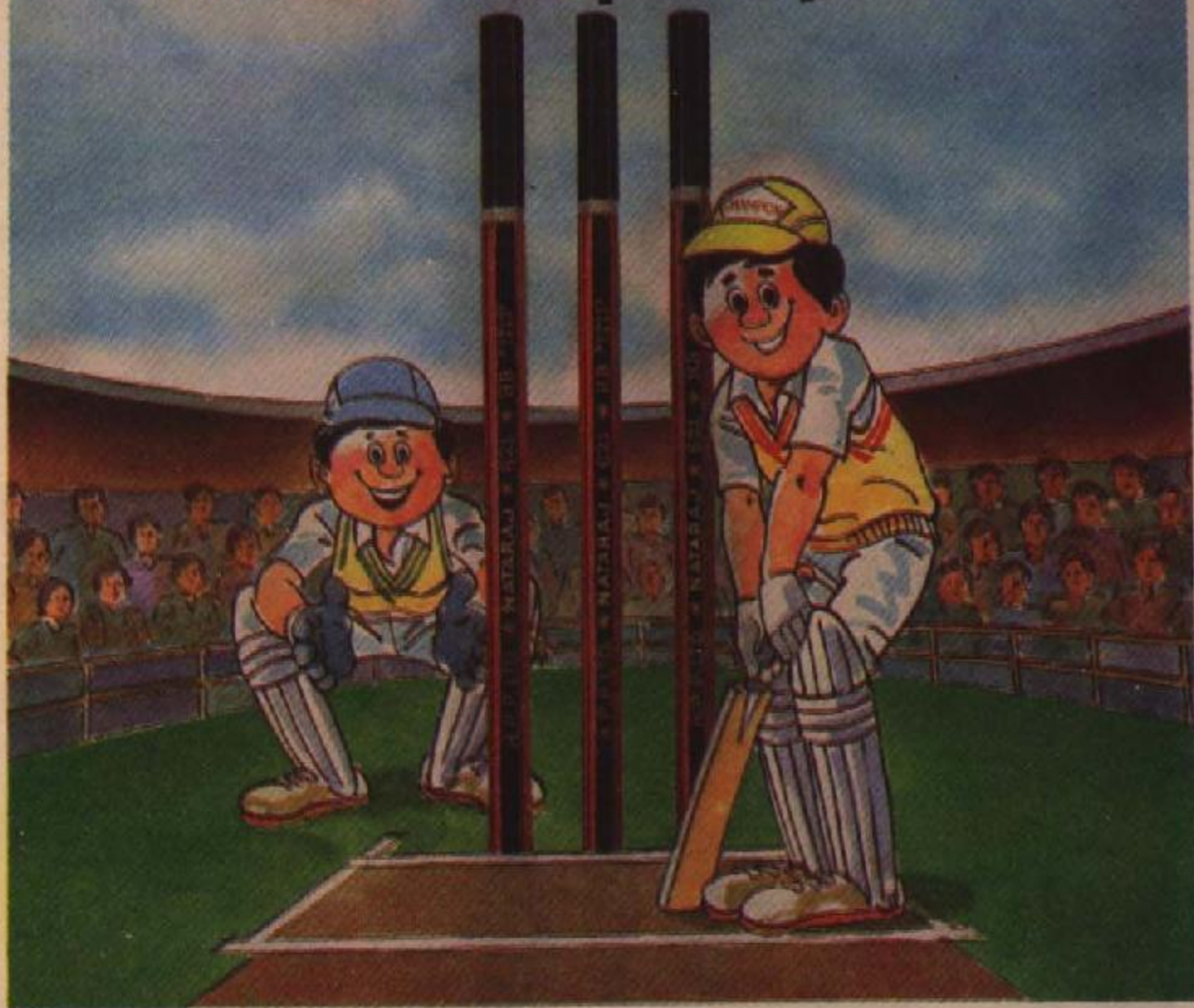


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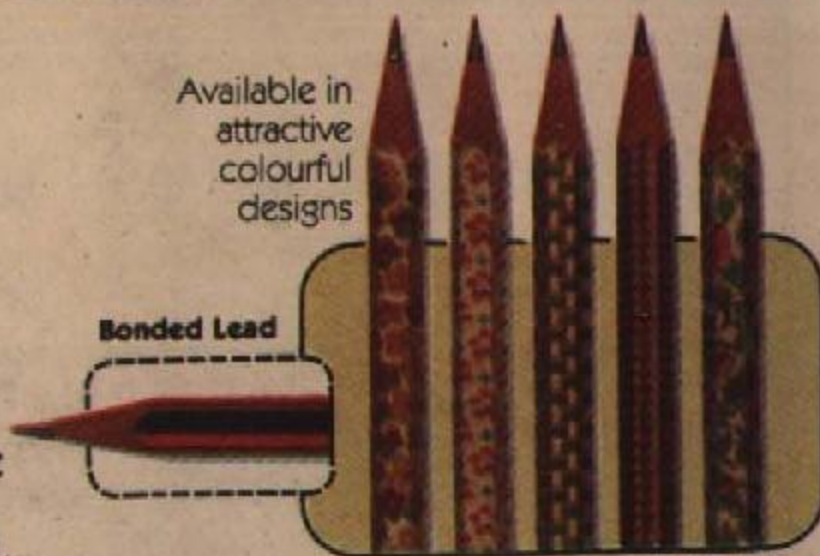
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